

Scottish Postcode Directory 2017/1

March 2017

Introduction

The Scottish Postcode Directory (SPD) bulletin contains specific information about each release of the Postcode Index and accompanying spatial data.

The Postcode Index links live and deleted postcodes to administrative, health, statistical and other areas. It also contains the Gridlink® one metre grid reference as well as National Records of Scotland (NRS) assigned grid references. The SPD is produced by NRS Geography, who provides geographic support to the Scottish Government (SG) and its associated agencies, as well as other organisations.

NRS have implemented the Government Statistical Service (GSS) standard 9-character codes for statistical geographies into the SPD. The SG maintains the 'Standard Geographic Codes Register – Scotland' and is responsible for assigning new geographies with a nine character code for Scotland. The register is available on the ['Scottish Neighbourhood Statistics Reference Documents'](#) section of the Scottish Government website. Customers are encouraged to adopt these standard names and codes, as they are the recognised standard to be used for National Statistics publications. More information on National Statistics can be found on the [UK Statistics Authority](#) website.

Latest Statistics

The data is based on the January 2017 release of Royal Mail's Postal Address File (PAF) and contains:

	All postcodes	Live postcodes	Deleted postcodes
All postcodes	235,901	156,988	78,913
Small User	188,233	150,237	37,996
Large User	47,668	6,751	40,917
Small User Linked ¹	19,206	4,274	14,932
PO Boxes	28,462	2,477	25,985

The number of live, digitised small user postcodes² is 148,990.

Please note that there are 264 deleted small user postcodes that do not hold a grid reference on our Postcode Index. These grid references have not been included because we did not digitise the postcode boundaries for these postcodes however they have been used for higher area assignments.

Footnote

- 1) Small User Linked: The Small User postcode that contains the grid reference of the Large User postcode.
- 2) Live digitised small user postcodes: There are 1,247 live, undigitised small user postcodes. These postcodes were planned for 'administrative' purposes; we could not digitise the small user postcodes as they had no distinctive geographical position.

1. New Postcode Management and Address Register System

1.1 Progress

Since the 2016/2 release we have been amending the postcode boundaries to ensure they contain all their address content. This process uses the NRS Scottish Address Directory which is derived from the Ordnance Survey AddressBase product and Royal Mail's Postcode Address File.

We have begun work on processing boundaries within Aberdeenshire, Argyll and Bute, Glasgow City, Highland and South Lanarkshire as these are the council areas most heavily affected by the issue. Following our completion of these council areas we will move on to the remaining 27 council areas with an aim to complete the bulk of postcode amendments in time for the 2017/2 release.

After consultation with statistical teams within NRS we have decided to continue our Split Postcode Policy. We will be providing additional guidance on split postcodes in an effort to increase understanding of their correct use.

1.2 Next Steps

We are planning to include a 'GridLink Status' field to compliment the 'GridLink Indicator' that was added in SPD 2016/2. The 'GridLink Status' field will provide users with a guide to the positional quality of the GridLink grid references supplied.

Users are reminded that grid references for PO Box addresses are assigned to the local Royal Mail sorting/delivery office and are deemed low quality.

Following this we will move to our next stage of improvement work.

Planned improvement work:

- Align boundaries (where possible) to the National Parks.
- Align boundaries (where possible) to the Strategic Development Plan Areas.
- Improvement to postcodes in a Locality area.
- Boundaries containing shared access postcodes (this is multi storeys)

Are there any areas you want us to look at? If so, please contact our Geography Customer Services team (email: geographycustomerservices@nrscotland.gov.uk) and we can look into this as part of the project. All feedback is welcomed.

2. New Geographies

2.1 Electoral Wards 2016

The 2016 Electoral Ward geography was published on 30 September 2016. More information regarding the new wards can be found on the [Fifth Electoral Reviews page](#) of the Local Government Boundary Commission's website.

These have replaced the 'ElectoralWard2011' on the SPD Postcode Index.

2.2 Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) 2016

The SIMD 2016 was published on 31 August 2016. More information regarding SIMD can be found on the [SIMD section](#) of the Scottish Government website.

These ranks have replaced the 'ScottishIndexofMultipleDeprivation2012Rank' on the SPD Postcode Index.

2.3 Islands 2016

The status of two islands has changed:

- Inchmahome is now inhabited, and
- Carna is now uninhabited.

These have replaced the 'Islands2014' on the SPD Postcode Index.

2.4 Community Health Partnerships and Sub Areas

As mentioned in the 2016/2 SPD bulletin the CommunityHealthPartnershipYYYYCode (YYYY = 2012, 2011, 2007 and 2004) and

CommunityHealthPartnershipSubAreas2011Code have been removed from the SPD Postcode Index.

3. Known Errors

3.1 Postcode Index – Small User

- Wrong Date of Introduction

A small amount of anomalies were discovered (listed below) in the 2016/2 postcode index. These issues have been fixed in time for the 2017/1 Scottish Postcode Directory.

Issue as shown on the postcode index from 2016/2:

Postcode	Date of Introduction	Delivery Point Count	Delivery Point Count Non Residential	Household Count
AB23 8PH	01-Aug-90	10	0	10
DG8 9BF	01-Aug-73	54	12	42
EH16 6DZ	19-Jul-16	9	0	9
EH16 6FN	19-Jul-16	9	0	9
KW14 7AU	05-Jul-10	15	0	15

Correction as shown in 2017/1:

Postcode	Date of Introduction	Delivery Point Count	Delivery Point Count Non Residential	Household Count
AB23 8PH	09-Oct-15	13	0	13
DG8 9BF	19-Jul-16	1	0	1
EH16 6DZ	30-Jun-16	11	0	11
EH16 6FN	30-Jun-16	15	0	15
KW14 7AU	19-Jul-16	16	0	16

- Conflicting date of introduction and deletion

There was one case of conflicting dates of introduction and deletion in the 2016/2 postcode index as shown below.

Postcode	Date of Introduction	Date of Deletion	Split Indicator	Delivery Point Count	Delivery Point Count Non Residential	Household Count
EH27 8EQ	01-Aug-73			29	1	29
EH27 8EQ	30-Jun-16	19-Jul-16	Y	1	1	0

During the loading of the July PAF update an erroneous record was mistakenly introduced while processing amends. This was caused by a postcode having a wrongly assigned split indicator and has been investigated and corrected in time for the 2017/1 Scottish Postcode Directory.

Correction as shown in 2017/1:

Postcode	Date of Introduction	Date of Deletion	Split Indicator	Delivery Point Count	Delivery Point Count Non Residential	Household Count
EH27 8EQ	30-Jun-16			1	1	0

- Postcode deleted in error

There was one case of a small user postcode deleted in error in the 2016/2 postcode index as shown below.

Postcode	Date of Introduction	Date of Deletion	Split Indicator	Delivery Point Count	Delivery Point Count Non Residential	Household Count
G52 4SB	17-Jul-06	19-Jul-16	Y	1	1	0
G52 4SB	19-Jul-16			1	1	0

Due to a postcode record having a wrongly assigned split indicator while processing amends and loading the July PAF update, an erroneous record was introduced. This has been investigated and corrected in time for the 2017/1 Scottish Postcode Directory.

Correction as shown in 2017/1:

Postcode	Date of Introduction	Date of Deletion	Split Indicator	Delivery Point Count	Delivery Point Count Non Residential	Household Count
G52 4SB	17-Jul-06			1	1	0

3.2 Postcode Index – Large User

- Unmapped postcodes

There were 85 large user postcodes (66 live and 19 deleted) that had 'unmapped' in the 'LinkedSmallUserPostcode' field.

These postcodes were introduced for use in postal votes.

While we resolved the issue with the majority of voting postcodes in 2016/2 for small user postcodes, we were unable to complete the update in regards to the large users. This has now been resolved in the 2017/1 Scottish Postcode Directory.

- LinkedSmallUserPostcode

We have recently discovered that the postcode provided in this field has not been updated at each SPD release. This has now been resolved in the 2017/1 Scottish Postcode Directory.

3.3 Postcode Index – Text file version

We have been made aware of an issue with the text version of the postcode index, where the latitude and longitude fields have been truncated to 2 decimal places.

The text file version of the postcode index is exported from the original Access database version. Unfortunately this truncation seems to be a 'feature' in Access which we were unaware of. We have changed the way we create the text file version of the postcode index as a result of this.

4. Differences in Scottish data between the SPD Postcode Index and the Office for National Statistics Postcode Directory (ONSPOST)

4.1 Postcode History

The SPD Postcode Index provides full postcode history; the ONSPOST provides the most current version of the postcode only (as shown below).

SPD Postcode Index:

Postcode	Date of Introduction	Date of Deletion
G31 4QD	01-Aug-73	01-May-95
G31 4QD	20-Apr-12	06-Jul-12
G31 4QD	17-Apr-13	07-Aug-13
G31 4QD	16-Jan-14	

ONSPOST:

Postcode	Date of Introduction	Date of Deletion
G31 4QD	201310	

4.2 Postcode Updates

Due to differing update regimes existing between ONS and NRS, the dates for introduction and deletion can differ. The SPD Postcode Index contains quarterly PAF updates, whereas the ONSPOST contains monthly PAF updates.

4.3 Split postcodes

Unlike the SPD Postcode Index the ONSPOST does not recognise split postcodes. Instead the ONSPOST holds the postcode as a whole record.

4.4 Future work

As part of the postcode management project we plan to look at the differences between the two products and will provide more information at a later date.

5. Supply arrangements

5.1 Data Formats

The 'Cut Version' of the Scottish Postcode Directory is available for free download from the [Scottish Postcode Directory](#) page of the National Records of Scotland website.

- Boundary files Shape format
One Scotland Mapping Agreement (OSMA) members only
- Index files Text or Microsoft (MS) Access 2000 compatible format

5.2 Full Version

The 'Full Version' of the Scottish Postcode Directory can be supplied for a charge (a royalty payment to Royal Mail), please contact the Geography Customer Services team.

6. Copyright and reproduction

6.1 Licence

Postcode Boundaries and Index – Cut Version

You may use this information (not logos) free of charge in any format or medium under the terms of the [Open Government Licence](#) (National Archives website).

6.2 Copyright Statement

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'Contains NRS data © Crown copyright and database right [year]'.

'Contains Ordnance Survey data © Crown copyright and database right [year]'.

6.3 Further information of licensing can be found in the geography [licensing](#) page of the NRS website.

7. User Guides

We are still planning to release 'How to' guides to help users extract data from our Scottish Postcode Directory products.

The guides will be based on ArcGIS and Microsoft Access, as these are the software packages we use to produce and interrogate the data. Our current plans for the content of the guides are based on the queries we have received:

ArcGIS

- Basics of Arc
- Calculate Area
- Join Data and Create Thematic map
- Define Projection
- Layout views, legends, labels
- Selections
- Format data for inclusion in Arc

Access

- List of live postcodes
- List of live postcodes and all the associated higher areas
- List of live postcodes for specific higher area
- Linking the Metadata to the Index
- Obtain Census population and household counts
- Join the Small and Large User tables

Are there any specific guides that you require? If so, please contact our Geography Customer Services team (email: geographycustomerservices@nrscotland.gov.uk) and we can look into this as part of the project.

8. Enquiries

Please contact our Geography Customer Services team if you need any further information.

E-mail: geographycustomerservices@nrscotland.gov.uk